

LYRICAL POEMS

THOMAS MAC DONAGH



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

8-8 **MACDONACH** Thomas. **Lyrical Poems.**

FIRST EDITION. 200. *original cloth. Dublin, 1813.*

£4 4s

100 lines of an Autograph Letter of Thomas MacDonagh, one page 8vo. in which he writes, "I'll send my chance of getting these poems sent!" Thomas MacDonagh was one of the leaders in the Irish Revolution of 1916, and suffered the death penalty.

8-9 ——— **Lyrical Poems.**

FIRST EDITION. Small 8vo. *original cloth. Dublin, 1813.*

£3 15s





Thomas Macdonagh, the Irish Poet,

LYRICAL POEMS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR
SONGS OF MYSELF
THOMAS CAMPION AND THE
ART OF ENGLISH POETRY

LYRICAL POEMS

THOMAS MAC DONAGH



THOMAS MACDONAGH,

DUBLIN
THE IRISH REVIEW
1913

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

To
MURIEL AND DONAGH MAC DONAGH

This volume contains the lyrical poems written by me since the publication of *Songs of Myself* in 1910. In addition it contains all that I wish to preserve of my previous work, with the exception of some poems in that book.

The Early Poems are taken from my three books, *Through the Ivory Gate*, published in 1902, April and May, published in 1903, and *The Golden Joy*, printed in 1904 and published in 1906. These books are long out of print. In *The Golden Joy* also were published four numbers (v, vi, vii, viii) of *The Book of Images*. Some of these early poems I have altered considerably, some slightly; some I have not touched again. I have taken nothing from *Songs of Myself*.

With regard to my mystical poems, especially some numbers of *The Book of Images*, I wish to say simply that they owe nothing to any other inspiration than the experiences which they record. I have no theories of mysticism. The images here enshrined I have known since my childhood as I have known myself, without any introduction that I am aware of and without need of explanation.

The making and re-making of these poems, my new work and my old, began in 1911, during the year that I lived in Grange House Lodge, Rathfarnham, the tenant and neighbour of my friend, David Houston.

OF THIS BOOK 500 COPIES HAVE BEEN PRINTED

CONTENTS

	PAGE
OF MY POEMS	I
GRANGE HOUSE LODGE	3
THE SONG OF JOY	5
THE BOOK OF IMAGES:	
I INTROIT	13
II IMAGES	14
III THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE	17
IV O STAR OF DEATH	20
V LITANY OF BEAUTY	24
VI THE GREAT	28
VII THE POET CAPTAIN	29
VIII THE GOLDEN JOY	31
TRANSLATIONS:	
THE YELLOW BITTERN	39
DRUIMFHIONN DONN DILIS	41
ISN'T IT PLEASANT FOR THE LITTLE BIRDS	42
EVE	43
CATULLUS: VIII	44
CATULLUS: LXXVI	45

EARLY POEMS:

	PAGE
WHEN IN THE FORENOON OF THE YEAR	49
I HEARD A MUSIC SWEET TO-DAY	50
LOVE IS CRUEL, LOVE IS SWEET	51
THE HOUSE IN THE WOOD BESIDE THE LAKE	52
A DREAM OF HELL	53
OF A POET PATRIOT	57
OF A GREEK POEM	58
IDEAL	59
THE SEASONS AND THE LEAVES	60
A SEASON OF REPOSE	61
WITH ONLY THIS FOR LIKENESS, ONLY THESE WORDS	65
FAIRY TALES	66
THE COMING-IN OF SUMMER	67
O BURSTING BUD OF JOY	68
FOR VICTORY	69
OF THE MAN OF MY FIRST PLAY	70
ENVOI: 1904	71

INSCRIPTIONS:

I A HALF OF PATHOS IS THE PAST WE KNOW	75
II WHAT OF MY CAREFUL WAYS OF SPEECH	75
III THOUGH SILENCE BE THE MEED OF DEATH	75
IV MY POET YEARNS AND SHUDDERS WITH DESIRE	76
V WINTER IS DEAD! HARK, HARK, UPON OUR HILLS	76
VI WHAT IS WHITE	76

	PAGE
IN PARIS	77
THE NIGHT HUNT	78
THE MAN UPRIGHT	80
WISHES FOR MY SON	82
POSTSCRIPTUM	85
NOTES	86

OF MY POEMS

There is no moral to my song,
I praise no right, I blame no wrong :
I tell of things that I have seen,
I show the man that I have been
As simply as a poet can
Who knows himself poet and man,
Who knows that unto him are shown
Rare visions of a Life unknown,
Who knows that unto him are taught
Rare words of wisdom all unsought
By him, and never understood
Till they are taken on trust for good
And, all unspoiled by pride, again
Uttered in trust to other men.
This is my practice and my rule,
Albeit I have been at school
These thirty years and studied much.
I've found wise books but never such
As could teach me a single word
To set by what my childhood heard.
I've studied conduct but not found
A single rule in all the round
Of sagest laws to set by this,
That he who runs to seek shall miss,
That he who waits in trusting calm
Shall have the laurel and the palm,

The singing way and winning way :
Who in himself aware can stay,
Leaving all memory and all strife,
Shall have the things of Truth and Life
Around him, as around a child
The timid creatures of the wild,—
Shall know the state that Adam gave
For gain of reason and the grave.

Let no one from this saying look
To find no poems in this book
But poems learned and uttered so :
Life I have lived and books I know,
And other common things I tell
That me and other men befell.
But when this rapture stirs the blood
When the first blossom breaks the bud
And Golden Joy begins anew,
Then in the calm stand near to view
The things we saw with Adam's eyes
In the first days of Paradise;
And these of all my seeing be
The light, and of my life to me :
They show to me the single bond
Of life with life here and beyond :
They lift my deeds the grave above
And give a meaning to my love.

So to you two for whose loved sake
This gathering of song I make
I need not tell of right and wrong
Or set a moral to my song.

GRANGE HOUSE LODGE

Babylon is passed away,
Dublin's day must now begin;
On the hill above the bay
Make your mansion, pray and sin.

Pray for grace yourself to be,
To be free in all you do,
For a straight sincerity,—
Grace to see a point of view.

And you'll sin in praying so,
For to know you're right is wrong,—
Yet we can't like blossoms grow
But to blow the wind along.

Sin is always very near—
It is here as in the crowd;
Know you're humble and austere,—
Be sincere and you'll be proud.

Once was purple Babylon
The pavilion of our pride,
Now the lodge of Mauravaun
Stays us on the mountain side.

In a lodge inside a gate
Live in state and live apart,
Till the little-distant date
When your fate will bid you start,—

Bid you leave this room and that,
Where you sat and where you slept,—
Lock the door and leave the mat,
Smiling at the way 'twas kept.

For, whate'er your sin or whim,
You were prim and rounded things;
And you kept your life in trim,
Though not as the hymn-book sings.

What about it after all?—
If you fall you rise again,
And at least you never sprawl
At the call of other men.

There again by pride you sin—
Come within and shut the door;
Far from Babylonian din
Now begin your prayer once more.

Save me from sincerity
Such as spoiled the Pharisee.—Amen.

THE SONG OF JOY

I

O mocking voice that dost forbid always
The poems that would win an easy praise,
Favouring with silence but the delicate, strong,
True creatures of inspirèd natural song,
Only the brood of Art and Life divine,
Thou say'st no fealty to the spurious line
Of phantasies of earth,—to mortal things
That strain to stay the heavens with their wings
And ape the crownèd orders at the Throne
Around a graven image of their own,
Setting the casual fact of one poor age
Aloft, enormous in its privilege
Of instant being!—O voice of the mind,
Wilt thou forbid the songs that come like wind
Out of the south upon the poet heart,—
Out of the quietude of certain art?
Now the cross tempests from the boreal frost
Harry my atmosphere, and I have lost
My joyous light of poetry in vain
Without the gloom profound of hell for gain—
With only hostile follies that annoy,
The brawls that overwhelm the song of joy,
And are not sorrowful or strong enough
To make a passion out of wrath or love—

Only To-day with its vain self at strife,
And affectations of fictitious life,
And spite, and prejudice, and out worn rules
Kept by the barren ignorance of fools.—
Why, when I come to thee, shunning them all,
Why must the harsh laughter of mockery fall
Upon my soul, waiting to know the word
Of a new song within my heart half heard?
Why must the music cease and hate come forth
To call these winds out of the withering north?

II

You bring a bitter atmosphere
Of blame and vain hostilities,
Stirring beauty and joy with fear
Of words, as night wind stirs the trees
With whispers which will leave them sere.

So, harsh and bare, your bitter heart
Will leave you like a bush alone,
Sullen and silent and apart,
When all the winds it called are gone—
The winds were airs of your own heart.

Ah, bitter heart, not always thus
You came, but with a storm of Spring,
With happiness impetuous,
With joy and beauty following—
Who now leave all these ruinous!

III

Not ruinous, O mockery, not all
 Ruinous quite!—Not sped beyond recall
 My storm of Spring, my storm of happy youth,
 That blew to me all gifts of joy but truth,
 That blew to me out of the Ivory Gate
 Figures and phantasies of life and fate.
 I sang of them that they were life enough,
 Giving them lasting names of joy and love;
 And when I saw their ghostly nothingness
 I made a bitter song out of distress,
 And cried how joy and love had passed me by;
 Though my heart happily whispered that I,
 Not truth of joy or love, had broken ease,
 Had broken from false quiet, won release.
 I sang distress, then came out fresh and new
 Into good life, knowing what fate would do.
 Not bitter, mockery, not harsh to blame,
 Not with dark winds of enmity I came,
 But following truth, in dread of shapes that seem
 Of life and prove but of a passing dream,—
 In dread of ease, that has the strongest chain,—
 In dread of the old phantasies again.
 The south wind blew : it was my storm of Spring —
 O tempest of my youth, what will you bring
 To me at last who know you now at last?—
 The south wind blew, and all my dread was past.
 Yet thou, O mockery, wouldst hold the word
 Of that harsh day, though here the south has stirred !

Cease now for ever, for that day is done ;
My sad songs are all sung, Joy is begun.
Voice of the mind, thy truth no more shall mock :
That door of ease with love's rare key I lock,—
And reverent, to Joy predestinate,
With the same key open my door of fate.

IV

A storm of Spring is blowing now
And love is throwing buds about !
Oh, there's a bloom on yonder bough
Under the withering leaves of doubt !—
The bough is green as Summer now.

O lover ! laugh, and laughing hold
What follows after piety :
In faith of love be over-bold,
Lover, the other self of me—
The bitter word no more I hold.

How could I mock you, happy one,
Who now have captured all a heart ?
Take up my tune and follow on :
Borrow the passion of my art
To sing your prothalamion !

v

Now no bitter songs I sing :
 Summer follows for me now ;
 For the Spirit of the Spring
 Breathes upon the living bough :
 All poor leaves of why and how
 Fall before this wonder, dead :
 Joy is given to me now
 In the love of her I wed.

She to-day is rash to cast
 All on love—and wise thereby ;
 Love is trust, and love at last
 Makes no count of how and why ;
 Worlds are wakened in the sky
 That had slept a speechless spell,
 At the word of faith,—and I
 Hold my faith from her as well.

For she trusts to love in all,
 Life and all, and life beyond ;
 And this world that was so small,
 Bounded by my selfish bond,
 Now is stretched to Trebizond,
 Upsala and Ecuador,
 East and west of black and blond,
 In my quest of queens like her.

Was she once a Viking's child
 That her beauty is so brave?

Sun-gold, happy in the wild
Of the winter and the wave,
Pedestal'd by cliff and cave,
With the raven's brood above,
In the North she stood and gave
Me the troth of all her love.

Or in Egypt the bright storm
Of her hair fell o'er my face,
And her features and her form,
Fashioned to that passionate grace.
Won me from an alien race
To her love eternally,
Life on life in every place
Where the gods cast her and me.

Here to-day we stand at last
Laughing in our new-born mirth
At the life that in the past
Was a phantasy of earth,
Vigil of our life's true birth
Which is joy and fate in one,
Now the wisdom of the earth
And the dooms of death are done.

So my bride is wise to-day
All to trust to love alone :
Other wisdom is the clay
That into the grave is thrown :
This is the awakening blown
By the Spirit of the Spring :
Laughing Summer follows soon,
And no bitter songs I sing.

THE BOOK OF IMAGES



THE BOOK OF IMAGES

I

INTROIT

COELI LUCIDA TEMPLA

The temples clean from star to star,
Built up in that aethereal space
Where forms of other being are,
Image no being of this place.

We symbol forms enshrined in them
Angels are emblemed in a clod,
And every stone is made a gem
Set in the altar of its God.

II

IMAGES

I who austereIy spent
My years of youth, nor lent
 The journeys of my joy
 To youth's employ,

Who sacred held my life
Apart from casual strife,
 Striving to comprehend
 Life's first and end.

I, in the watches grim
Of winter mornings dim,
 Saw life inscrutable
 A God's vigil,

And in a morn of May
Heard at the dawn of day
 The music of that morn
 The stars were born.

I ancient images
Of parts and passages
 Of powers and things that be
 Did know and see,

The chalice and the wine,
The tree of knowledge divine,
 The veil, the gossamer,
 The hill-side bare,

The trampling ploughing team,
The holy guiding gleam
Of one star standing straight
Above Light's gate,

The child with rapturous voice
Singing, Farewell! Rejoice!
Singing the joy of death
The gate beneath,

The dumb shores of a sea,
The waves that ceaselessly
Uselessly turn and toss,
Knowing their loss,

The flowers of heaven and earth,
The moons of death and birth,
The seasons of the soul,
The worlds that roll

That roll their dark within
Around their suns that spin
Around the gate of Light
In day, in night,

The soaring Seraphim,
The God-wise Cherubim,—
Forms of beauty and love
I saw above.

And therebeneath I saw
The forms of transient law,
The great of an earth or age,
Captain and sage,

The lamps of Rome and Greece,
The signs of war and peace,
The eagle in the storm,
Man's clay-fast form.

The phases of the might
Of God in mortal sight
I saw, in God's forethought
Fashioned and wrought,

Now wrought in spirit and clay,
In rare and common day,
And shown in symbol and sign
Of power divine.

These images of old
Reverently I hold,
And here entemple, enstate.
And dedicate,

That I with other men
May worship here again
Him who revealed to us
His creatures thus.

III

THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

In the dusk I again behold
Figures of knowledge divine,
A chalice of sacred gold
Filled to the brim with wine,
A double-woven veil
With meshes that enfold
A gauze of gossamer frail :
I tremble and lie still,
Held by a holy dread
Lest the wine from the chalice spill
And the knowledge of God lie dead.
I lose the chalice from view
Through infirmity of will.

I take the veil in my hands
And to uncover the gauze
I open the woven strands—
And then in dread I pause
Lest the gossamer be rent
And the perfect knowledge destroyed :
Then I know how power is spent
And the deed of the will made void.
The veil has vanished too,
And barren before me lies
The hill where once I knew
The lost secret of Paradise.

It was there I was as the wild
Of the earth and the water and air,
Untroubled by knowledge, the child
Of God and Time—it was there
I shouted with joy in the light
With the stars of morning and God,
Where the knowledge tree in my sight
Bent with fruit to the sod.
There the spirit of me awoke
To the serpent's constant call,
To the earth of me it spoke
And bade me to know all,
To eat and be as a god.
I ate and was a man,
With desire as a god to be,
For then I first began
Knowledge to taste and to see,
And the eternal plan
To know, and be one with the laws
That are with eternity.

I ate and was a man
Upon a bare hill side,
For the tree was withered up
And the ancient life had died.
I held a gossamer gauze,
And I gazed on a golden cup.

And now again I have seen
The cup that I saw at my birth,
And have held the gauze between
Its webs in a veil of the earth,
And I gaze on the hill again
Where the tree that withered shall grow

When I in pleasure and pain
Have toiled to the full and know.

I gaze on the hill to see
New promise of knowledge divine.
I know that infirmity
Shall be changed to power with the sign
That to me is given now.
And I hear the trampling of hooves
Thundering up with a plough,
And a team of horses moves
In splendour over the rise
Of the ridge, and into the light.
I shout with joy at the sight
As I shouted in Paradise.

IV

O STAR OF DEATH

MORTEM VITAM MORS CUM IMMORTALIS ADEMPT

The earth in its darkness spinning
Is a sign from the gate of horn
Of the dream that a life's beginning
Is in its end reborn—
Dark symbol of true dreaming,
The truth is beyond thy seeming
As the wide of infinitude
Is beyond the air of the earth!
Death is a change and a birth
For atoms in darkness spinning
And their immortal brood.

The wisdom of life and death
As a star leads to the gate
Which is not of heaven or hell;
And your mortal life is a breath
Of the life of all, and your state
Ends with your hail and farewell.

Wisdom's voice is the voice
Of a child who sings to a star
With a cry of, Hail and rejoice!
And farewell to the things that are,
And hail to eternal peace,
And rejoice that the day is done,

For the night brings but release
And threatens no wakening sun.
 Other suns that set may rise
 As before your day they rose,
 But when once your brief light dies
 No dawn here breaks your repose.

I followed a morning star,
And it led to the gate of light,
And thence came forth to meet our night
A child and sang to the star.
The air of the earth and the night were withdrawn
And the star was the sign of an outworn dawn
That now in the aether was newly bright.
For sudden I saw where the air through space was gone
From the portal of light and the child and the sign o'er
 the portal—
The star of joy a mortal leading
In the clear stood holy and still,
And under it the child sang on.
I who had followed of happy will,
Knew the dark of life receding—
One with the child and the star stood a mortal.

The child sang welcomes of the gate of light—
Welcome to the peace of perfect night
Everduring, unbeginning!
Now let the mornings of the earth bring grief
To other souls a while in darkness spinning,
To other souls that look for borrowed light,
Desiring alien joys with vain belief.
Welcome and hail to this beyond all good,
Joy of creation's new infinitude,

That never will the spirit use
Another time for life, and yet
That never will the spirit lose,
Although it pass, but takes its debt
To life and time, and sends endued
With gain of life each atom soul
New-fashioned to fulfil the whole.

O star of death! O sign that still hast shone
Out beyond the dark of the air!
Thou stand'st unseen by yearning eyes
Of mourners tired with their vain prayer
For the little life that dies,—
Whether holding that it dies
That all life may still live on
In its death as in its birth,
Or believing things of earth
Destined ever to arise
To a new life in the skies.
Blinded with false fear, how man
Dreads this death which ends one span
That another may begin!—
Holding greatest truth a sin
And a sorrow, as not knowing
That when death has lost false hope
And false fear, begins the scope
Of true life, which is a going
At its end and not a coming,
That the heart shrinks from the numbing
Fall of death, but does not grope
Blindly to new joy or gloom—
Shrinks in vain, then yields in peace
To the pain that brings release
And the quiet of the tomb.

O star of death! I follow, till thou take
My days to cast them from thee flake on flake,
My rose of life to scatter bloom on bloom,
Yet hold its essence in the phial rare
Of life that lives with fire and air,—
With air that knows no dark, with fire not to consume.

I followed a morning star
And I stand by the gate of Light,
And a child sings my farewell to-night
To the atom things that are.

LITANY OF BEAUTY

Joy, if the soul or aught immortal be,
How may this Beauty know mortality?

O Beauty, perfect child of Light,
Sempiternal spirit of delight!
White and set with gold like the gold of the night,
The gold of the stars in quiet weather,—
White and shapely and pure!—
O lily-flower from stain secure,
With life and virginity dying together!

One lily liveth so,
Liveth for ever unstained, immortal, a mystic flower:
Perfectly wrought its frame,
Gold inwrought and eternal white,
White more white than cold of the snow,
For never, never, near it came,
Never shall come till the end of all,
Hurtful thing in wind or shower,
Worm or stain or blight;
But ever, ever, gently fall
The dews elysian of years that flow
Where it doth live secure
In flawless comeliness mature,
Golden and white and pure,

In the fair far-shining glow
Of eternal and holy Light.

Beauty of earthly things
Wrought by God and with hands of men!
Beauty of Nature and Art,
Fashioned anew for each life Time brings,
For each new soul and living heart!
Beauty of Beauty that fills the ken
Till the soul is swooning, faint with delight!
Beauty of human form and voice,
Of eyes and ears and lips!—
O golden hair and brow of white!—
Wine of Beauty that whoso sips
Doth die to a spirit free, and rejoice,
Living with God and living with men,
Rapt rejoice in eternal bliss,
Raising his face to meet the kiss
Of the Beauty seraphic he sees above
In figure of his love.

O Beauty of wisdom unsought
That in trance to poet is taught,
Uttered in secret lay,
Singing the heart from earth away,
Cunning the soul from care to lure,—
O mystic lily, from stain and death secure,
Till the end of all to stay!
O shapely flower that must for ever endure!
O voice of God that every heart must hear!
O hymn of purest souls that dost unsphere
The ravished soul that hears! O white, white gem!
O rose that dost the senses drown in bliss!
No thought shall stay the wing, or stem

The song or win the heart to miss
Thy love, thy joy, thy rapture divine !
O Beauty, Beauty, ever thine
The soul, the heart, the brain,
To own thee in a loud perpetual strain,
Shriller and sweeter than song of wine,
Than song of sorrow or love or war !

Beauty of heaven and sun and day,
Beauty of water and frost and star,
Beauty of dusk-tide, narrowing, grey !

Beauty of silver light,
Beauty of purple night,
Beauty of solemn breath,
Beauty of closed eye, and sleep, and death !

Beauty of dawn and dew,
Beauty of morning peace,
Ever ancient and ever new,
Ever renewed till waking cease
Or sleep for ever, when loud the angel's word
Through all the world is heard !

Beauty of brute and bird,
Beauty of earthly creatures
Whose hearts by the hand of God are stirred !

Beauty of the soul,
Beauty informing forms and features,
Fairest to God's eye,—
Beauty that cannot fade or die
Though atoms to ruin roll !

Beauty of blinded Trust,

Led by the hand of God
To a heaven where Cherub hath never trod !

Austere Beauty of Truth
Lighting the way of the just !

Splendid Beauty of Youth,
Staying when Youth is sped,
Living when Life is dead,
Burning in funeral dust !

The glory of form doth pale and pall,
Beauty endures to the end of all.

THE GREAT

This way in power the great went by.

Hark to the echoes throbbing still!
Hark to the voices chanting high
Deeds for a while that shall not die!

Splendid they shone in purple and gold.

See where we caught the perfect gleam,—
Wrought it in tapestry of old.
The purple fades but the gold is gold.

The great, they bore a soul in each,
A link-shell in the chain of souls,
Theirs were the jewels of Life's beach,
From gem to gem an age doth reach.

Heaven-lent, for Heaven they held their dream,
Though their vesture, e'en purple, marked it not:
The earthlings one in fortune seem,
But are forgone—no gold, no gleam!

This way the great shall ever pace,—
Be our great the great till the end of it;
Fall not our gold from its burnished place;
Be our voice not dumb to another race.

This way—or so then, not this way,
Perhaps not thus the great will go;
Perhaps our Heaven they will gainsay;
Our jewels perhaps—so not this way.

VII

THE POET CAPTAIN

They called him their king, their leader of men, and he led them well
For one bright year, and he vanquished their foe,
Breaking more battles than bards may tell,
Warring victoriously,—till the heart spake low
And said—Is it thus? Do not these things pass? What things abide?
They are but the birds from the ocean, the waves of the tide;
And thou art naught beside,—grass and a form of clay.
And said—The Ligurian fought in his day,—
In vain, in vain! Rome triumphs. He left his friends to the fight,
And their victory passed away,
And he like a star that flames and falls in the night.

But after another year they came to him again,
And said—Lead us forth again. Come with us again.
But still he answered them—You strive against fate, in vain
They said—Our race is old. We would not have it pass.
Ere Rome began we are, a gentle people of old,
Unsavage when all were wild.
And he—How Egypt was old in the days that were old,
Yet is passed, and we pass.
They said—We shall have striven, unreconciled.
And he went with them again, and they conquered again.

Till the same bare season closed his unquiet heart
To all but sorrow of life—This is in vain! Of yore
Lo, Egypt was, and all things do depart,
This is in vain! And he fought no more.

He conned the poems that poets had made in other days,
And he loved the past that he could pity and praise.
And he fought no more, living in solitude,
Till they came and called him back to the multitude,
Saying—Our olden speech and our old manners die.
He went again, and they raised his banner on high :
Came Victory, eagle-formed, with wings wide flung,
As with them a while he fought, with never a weary thought, with never
a sigh,
That their children might have again their manners and ancient
tongue.

But again the sorrow of life whispered to his soul
And said—O little soul, striving to little goal !
Here is a finite world where all things change and change !
And said—In Mexico a people strange
Loved their manners and speech long ago when the world was young !
Their speech is silent long—What of it now?—Silent and dead
Their manners forgotten, and all but their memory sped !
And said—What matter? Heart will die and tongue ;
Or if they live again they live in a place that is naught,
With other language, other custom, different thought.
He left them again to their fight, and no more for him they sought.

But they chose for leader a stern sure man
That looked not back on the waste of story :
For his country he fought in the battle's van,
And her won her peace and he won her glory.

VIII

THE GOLDEN JOY

What has the poet but a glorious phrase
And the heart's wisdom?—Oh, a Joy of gold!
A Joy to mint and squander on the Kind,—
Pure gold coined current for eternity,
Giving dear wealth to men for a long age,
And after, lost to sight and touch of hands,
Leaving a memory that will bud and bloom
And blossom all into a lyric phrase--
The glorious phrase again on other lips,
The heritage of Joy, the heart again,
Wisdom anew that ages not but lives
To Sappho-sing the Poet else forgot.

O Joy! O secret transport of mystic vision,
Who hold'st the keys of Ivory and Horn,
Who join'st the hands of Earth and Faerie!
Thou art the inmate of the hermit soul
That shuns the touch of every street-worn wind
Sweet to all else, that shuns doctrine and doubt,
To wait in trembling quietness for thee.
Thou art the spouse of the busy human mind
That bravely, sanely, bears his worldly part
And claims no favour for the gift of thee;
But, Nature's child, lives true in Nature's right,
Filling the duties of the Tribe of Man,
Keeping the heart, O Joy! untarnished still
And pinion-strong to soar the exalted way.

The Poet guards the philosophic soul
In contemplation, that no importunate thought
May mar his ecstasy or change his song;
And though he see the gloom and sing of sorrow,
He is the world's Herald of Joy at last:
His song is Joy, the music that needs sorrow
To fill its closes, as Death fulfils Life,
As Life fills Time, and Time Eternity:
Joy that sees Death, yet in Death sees not woe.

O Joy! the Spring is green—on many a wall
The roses straggle, on many a tree dew-laden;
And now the waters murmur 'neath their banks
And all the flocks are loud with firstling cries,
And in the heart of life Joy wakes anew
To live a long day ere the winter falls;
And now the song of an invisible lark,
And now a child's voice makes the morning glad;
The kindling sky and the mist-wreathed earth
Have broken from the drowsihood of night,—
Dawn widened grey, but now the orient blush
Is over all the roses on the wall,
Over the drooping trees that wait the winds
To join them to the murmur of the day.

The Pilgrim Seer who journeyed silently
When all the ways were Winter, wild and bare,
Tarries to-day to hear the call of bliss,—
Of Joy, Joy, Joy! thou emblem, symbol, sign
Of all the Pilgrim's dream of Paradise—
The Beatific Vision of Beauty supreme!
Thou art the Angel of the Gate of Heaven!
Thou art the great Vice-regent of the King!

Then forward goes and will not brook Life's house,
Yearning to dwell far away, far away,

In the wide palace of Eternity—
To hold a life beyond this birth and death
With the high Prophets in their calm sublime.—
Ah yet, in Joy's despite, his heart will keep
Memorial futile melancholy thought
Of this and some that never knew the gold !
And so he turns, bows down to toil with men,
To toil and strive and care for earthy cares ;
The common life that has her claim on all
Claims him, and yet leaves him his ecstasy ;
Knowing the glooms of life and the dark nights,
Sure of the dawns and the white Summer days,
He sings in twilight and the state of Job
One golden Dawn and one enduring Wealth !
So he keeps ever burning in his heart
The fire eternal that will flame and shine
When the man lies compounded with the rest
Who never knew to look upon his light,
Whose light none saw, whose lives are all forgot.
One is Eternity to common man,
Twain to the poet soul ;—though his name die,
Though after fall of years many or few
His phrases wander out of memory's fold,
His soul is twain, a heritage has he,
His dreams are children dreams and parent dreams.

What has the Poet but a glorious phrase
And the heart's wisdom? He has naught to do
With April changes that your lives endue,
Sunshine and shadow. Him your blame and praise
Trouble in calm along the spirit's ways
That are with the great Change, unchanging, true,
With the great Silence where no voice is new
And no voice old—a train of prophet days.

What but the Golden Joy that sacred stands
As gift of Paradise to human art?
For though the lust of the world still claims and brands
All others, the Joy stands for us apart
And will not fail or tarnish touched by hands
That highly bear the trust of poet heart.

So would I rhythm and rime the glorious phrase
In this Spring lyric morning of my day,
When brown and green and nebulous silver lie
Quiet and happy 'neath the vernal pomp
Of that rich sky,—the trees a dome of song,
Song in the waters, in the sea-born wind,
And in the human soul the Cherub hymn
Of Joy, which is the heart's philosophy.

Dear holy hymn, yet wert thou sad to hear
Matched with the dream song of the Ivory Gate
That waked a boy to rapture long ago,
That raised a boy to poet in an hour,
That the boy failed to mimic with his voice
But held heart-hid against his vocal day
And sings here to thee, Joy, this lyric morn!
For first he sang out of a book of Death
Before his day, and then with weaker voice
Chanted of resurrection, sang for Hope
All in a Spring like this, before his day.
Of Beauty now which is the light of Hope
He sings and of the Quest that cannot cease
Voyaging to Wonder on an endless road;
But chiefly and over all and through the whole
Sings yet the memory of untaught days
When dawn and dark brought to the waiting soul
The vision that he sees now through the dusk
Leading him back to thy tranquillity.

I saw last night again the Unknown Land,
And, travelled far, I stood beside a sea
Whose pale waves crowding stared head over head
And mouthed warning inarticulate.
Spirits of poets they, high called and lost,
Thus missing half the Man's eternity
For gaining half the Poet's, Joy forgone.
And there by the dread waste of liquid life
My feet were set upon a living shore
Wrought of the souls that never knew the Joy
And never needed, never lost,—all dumb
But at long rest while the waves turn and toss.
These quiet I loved more than the quick foam,
And yet the human pity at my heart
Stirred and would draw me to that passionate shame,
But that the Joy flamed and the glorious phrase
Broke into rapture : the waves wept to hear,
Wept for the exaltation once their own,
Wept for the gold they never more may spend
In mintage of the phrase upon the Kind,
Wept, wept, to scatter from the spirit's tower
The joy-notes and the glory of this song.
I hastened thence to spare them cruelty
Out through the Ivory Gate,—and thus I know
The dream was but a symbol of the true.

It is the Spring and these the songs of Spring,
Songs of the rathe rose and the lily's hope;—
For now the Poet hears the lily call
That came to Christ from beauty's natural shrine
And, through his lips, soared sacred out and up
Into the space beyond of holiness,
The aether of the rapture of High God.
Oh ! it steals to us like the breath of dawn

That fills the pipes of Nature with sweet sounds,—
Steals low and swells anon into a chant
To throb and triumph through the heart of Spring
With the clear canticle of Love that hails
The orient Epiphany of Joy.
And now the poet heart is calling too
And called aloud by every voice divine
Behind our wall out through the lattices.
Now is the season of the Golden Joy,
Now is the season of the birth of Love—
The perfect passion of the heart of God,
The rapture of the beauty of the world,
The rapture of eternity of bliss!
For all our Winters pass and all rains go,
And all the flowers of Joy appear again,
And Spring is green with figs more beautiful
And sweet with odours of the mystic Tree
That droops its branches over Heaven and Earth,
Scattering flowers and fruit and passionate wine
Down into all the places of the sun,
And into all the nether places dim,
Fragrant with ecstasy of Joy and Peace.
And who will steep his senses in the flowers
And who will feed his spirit on the fruit
And who will fill his veins with the great wine
Shall see no Winters and shall feel no rains
But Joy perpetual in the Land of God.

TRANSLATIONS

TRANSLATIONS

THE YELLOW BITTERN

(FROM THE IRISH OF CATHAL BUIDHE MAC GIOLLA GHUNNA)

The yellow bittern that never broke out
In a drinking bout, might as well have drunk;
His bones are thrown on a naked stone
Where he lived alone like a hermit monk.
O yellow bittern! I pity your lot,
Though they say that a sot like myself is curst—
I was sober a while, but I'll drink and be wise
For I fear I should die in the end of thirst.

It's not for the common birds that I'd mourn,
The black-bird, the corn-crake or the crane,
But for the bittern that's shy and apart
And drinks in the marsh from the lone bog-drain.
Oh! if I had known you were near your death,
While my breath held out I'd have run to you,
Till a splash from the Lake of the Son of the Bird
Your soul would have stirred and waked anew.

My darling told me to drink no more
Or my life would be o'er in a little short while;
But I told her 'tis drink gives me health and strength
And will lengthen my road by many a mile.
You see how the bird of the long smooth neck
Could get his death from the thirst at last—
Come, son of my soul, and drain your cup,
You'll get no sup when your life is past.

In a wintering island by Constantine's halls
A bittern calls from a wineless place,
And tells me that hither he cannot come
Till the summer is here and the sunny days.
When he crosses the stream there and wings o'er the sea
Then a fear comes to me he may fail in his flight—
Well, the milk and the ale are drunk every drop,
And a dram won't stop our thirst this night.

DRUIMFHIONN DONN DILIS

(FROM THE IRISH, TRADITIONAL)

— O Druimfhionn Donn Dilis!
O Silk of the Kine!
Where goest thou for sleeping?
What pastures are thine?

— In the woods with my gilly
Always I must keep,
And 'tis that now that leaves me
Forsaken to weep.

Land, homestead, wines, music :
I am reft of them all !
Chief and bard that once wooed me
Are gone from my call !
And cold water to soothe me
I sup with my tears,
While the foe that pursues me
Has drinking that cheers.

— Through the mist of the glensides
And hills I'll return :
Like a brogue beyond mending
The Sasanach I'll spurn :
If in battle's contention
I have sight of the crown,
I'll befriend thee and defend thee,
My young Druimfhionn Donn !

ISN'T IT PLEASANT FOR THE LITTLE BIRDS

(FROM THE IRISH, TRADITIONAL)

Isn't it pleasant for the little birds
That rise up above,
And be nestling together
On the one branch, in love?
Not so with myself
And the darling of my heart—
Every day rises upon us
Far, far apart.

She is whiter than the lily,
Than beauty more fine.
She is sweeter than the violin,
More radiant than sunshine
But her grace and nobleness
Are beyond all that again—
And O God Who art in Heaven,
Free me from pain!

EVE

(FROM THE OLD IRISH)

I am Eve, great Adam's wife,
I that wrought my children's loss,
I that wronged Jesus of life,
Mine by right had been the cross.

I a kingly house forsook,
Ill my choice and my disgrace,
Ill the counsel that I took
Withering me and all my race.

I that brought winter in
And the windy glistening sky,
I that brought sorrow and sin,
Hell and pain and terror, I.

CATULLUS: VIII

My poor Catullus, what is gone is gone,
Take it for gone, and be a fool no more—
Heaven, what a time it was! Then white suns shone
For you, you following where she went before—
I loved her as none ever shall be loved!

Then happened all those happy things—all over,
All over, all gone now, and far away!
Then you got all you would, my happy lover,
And she was not unwilling—day after day
White suns shone, white suns shone, and you were loved.

And now she is unwilling—let her know
That you can turn back from a vain pursuit.
Now live no longer wretched, turn and go
Strong on your way, be hard, be resolute.—
Good bye, my dear. Catullus goes unmoved.

Catullus never will yearn for you again.
You are unwilling—he will not ask for you.
You'll sorrow when no one asks for you,—and then,
Bitter and bad and old, what will you do?
What hope have you to give love and be loved?

What life is there for you?—What life is there?
Who will come now for love and your delight?
Whose will they say you are? Who'll think you fair?
Whom will you kiss? Whose lips now will you bite?
But you, Catullus, go your way unmoved.

CATULLUS: LXXVI

If there be joy for one who looks back on his youth
And knows he has kept faith with God and men,
Never outraged the sanctity of truth,
And never outraged trust—there is joy then
For you, Catullus, in the long years to be,
Out of this love, out of this misery.

For all the service and duty that men can wish and give
You have given to one heart, and you know their loss—
They are lost, and their loss tortures you, and you live
Wretched to rail at fate—you are on your cross!
Leave your cross. Take the only cure, and be
Resolute, rid of love and misery!

It is hard at once to lay aside the love of years—
It is hard, but must be—God! if ever you gave
Help to the dying—if you are moved by tears,
Look on me wretched! Pity me and save!
I have lived pure—from this love let me free!
Let me free, root this canker out of me!

This lethargy has crawled through all my heart and brain,
And driven out joy, like death evil and sure.
I do not ask that she love me again,
Nor—what can not be now—that she be pure.
Let me be strong, rid of this agony—
O God, for what I have been grant this to me!

EARLY POEMS

EARLY POEMS

WHEN IN THE FORENOON OF THE YEAR

When in the forenoon of the year
 Fresh flowers and leaves fill all the earth,
I hear glad music, faint and clear,
 Singing day's birth.

Its dear delight thrills the dawn through
 With melody like an old lay
Of country birds and morning dew
 And of the May.

And then I hear the first cock crow,
 And then the twitter in the eaves,
And gaze upon the world below
 Through green rose leaves.

And see the white mist melt away,
 And watch the sleepless sheep come out
Under the trees that hear all day
 One cuckoo's shout.

I HEARD A MUSIC SWEET TO-DAY

I heard a music sweet to-day,
A simple olden tune,
And thought of yellow leaves of May
And bursting buds of June,
Of dewdrops sparkling on a spray
Until the thirst of noon.

A golden primrose in the rain
Out of the green did grow—
Ah! sweet of life in Winter's wane
When airs of April blow!—
Then drifted with the changing strain
Into a dream of snow.

LOVE IS CRUEL, LOVE IS SWEET

Love is cruel, love is sweet,—

Cruel, sweet.

Lovers sigh till lovers meet,

Sigh and meet—

Sigh and meet, and sigh again—

Cruel sweet! O sweetest pain!

Love is blind—but love is sly,

Blind and sly.

Thoughts are bold, but words are shy—

Bold and shy—

Bold and shy, and bold again—

Sweet is boldness,—shyness pain.

THE HOUSE IN THE WOOD BESIDE THE LAKE

The house in the wood beside the lake
That I once knew well I must know no more
My slow feet other paths must take—
How soon would they reach the old-known door!
But now that time is o'er.

The lake is quiet and hush to-day;
The downward heat keeps the water still
And the wind that round me used to play
Ere through elm and oak from the pine-clad hill
I plunged with heart a-thrill.

A time can die as a man can die
And be buried too and buried deep;
But a memory lives though the ages fly—
I know two hearts one memory keep
That cannot die or sleep.

How clear the shadow of every tree—
The oaks and elms in stately line!
The lake is like a silent sea
Of emerald, or an emerald mine,
Till the forest thins to pine.

For the slender pine has never a leaf,
And the sun and the breeze break through at will—
There's a weed that the eddy whirls in a sheaf
In the brown lake's depths, all wet and chill,—
I call it the lake-pine still.

Such idle names we used to give
To the weeds as we passed here in our boat—
We shall pass no more, and they shall live
While others o'er them idly float—
They shall neither hear nor note.

They are things that never hear or see—
Yet once I trusted my heart to all;
I heard my tale from many a tree,—
Thought the lake-pines knew one light foot-fall,
One laugh and one low call.

And perhaps they did, for all the day
They seem like me to be sad and lone;
The current has not come to play
And twist its sheaf; no breeze has blown,
Though yon the sedges moan.

And oft o'er the waters I fondly bowed,
And made believe that I saw there
One face, for my fancy featured a cloud
Or showed me my own more bright and fair—
How vainly now I stare!

Is it vain to think that at some time yet—
Far off, perhaps in a thousand years—
We shall meet again as we have met:
A meeting of olden joy and tears
Which all the more endears.

Perhaps in a house beside a lake
In a wood of elm and oak and beech—
Ah, hope is long! It can wait and wake.
Though the world be dead it can forward reach
And join us each to each.

But I fear the waiting—God, recall,
Recall, recall Thy fated will!
How can I wait while the slow leaves fall
From the tree of time, and I fulfil
My vigil lone and chill?

How can I wait for what is mine?—
Thou didst will it so, and Thou art just—
Oh, give me the life of the water-pine
Till I hear one laugh, one call I trust,
One foot-fall in the dust!

Mine then! Mine now, by changeless fate—
I ask but this with humble soul;—
But bid me not, O God, to wait
With miser hope's reluctant dole
While wakeful aeons roll!

The time I loved is dead, cold dead;
For it could die, and shall not rise
As I shall from a grosser bed
To wait and watch with hungered eyes
And many a vain surmise.

The sedge and pines are moaning now;
The current comes to twist its sheaf;
The shadow of the isle-tree bough
Is blotted out; and twilight brief
Foreruns long night of grief.

A DREAM OF HELL

Last night I dreamt I was in hell;
In waking dread I dream it yet;
I feel the gloom, my brow is wet;
My soul is prisoner of the spell.

Hell, gloomy, still,—no fire, no cry.
Flames were a joy and shrieks delight.
And sounds of woe and painful light
Were bliss to gloom without a sigh.

I dreamt that moments passed like years,
In dumb blind darkness whelmed and drowned,
In silence of a single sound,
In grief eternal void of tears.

A single sound I heard all night
Pulse through the stillness like a sob :
I heard the weary changeless throb
Of dead damned hearts the silence smite.

No change, no end; no end, no change—
As in a death house when the door
Is closed, and to return no more
One form is gone, when stillness strange

Creeps in and in one dim room stays,
The widow, who with sleepless eyes
Has watched long, hears with dull surprise
A ticking she has heard for days,

So heard I myriad heart-beats blend
Into one mighty changeless knell,
The throb-song of the silent hell :
No end, no change ; no change, no end.

In silence, solitude and gloom,
With working brain and throbbing heart,
Remembering things that cannot start
To life again out of the tomb,

Remembering, ruing, day by day,
And year by year, and age by age,
In sorrow without tear or rage
Watching the moments pass away,

I found thee—of all mortals thee !—
Buried in hell for endless time,
Buried in hell for unknown crime,
Who ever wert a saint to me.

I found thee there—I know not how—
And thou wilt never know that I,
Thy pitying friend of earth, was nigh—
My pity ne'er can reach thee now.

OF A POET PATRIOT

His songs were a little phrase
Of eternal song,
Drowned in the harping of lays
More loud and long.

His deed was a single word,
Called out alone
In a night when no echo stirred
To laughter or moan.

But his songs new souls shall thrill,
The loud harps dumb,
And his deed the echoes fill
When the dawn is come.

OF A GREEK POEM

Crave no more that antique rapture
Now in alien song to reach :
Here uncouth you cannot capture
Gracious truth of Attic speech.

Utterly the flowers perish,
Grace of Athens, Rome's renown,
Giving but a dream to cherish
Tangled in a laurel crown.

I that splendour far pursuing
Left unlit the lamps of home,
And upon my quest went ruing
That I found not Greece or Rome.

IDEAL

Fragment of a perfect plan
Is the mortal life of man :
Beauty alone can make it whole,
Beauty alone can help the soul
To labour over the island span
Lying between seas that roll
Darkly, forward and behind :
Beauty beatific will bind
The mortal and the immortal mind.

THE SEASONS AND THE LEAVES

Now when the storms have driven out the cold
The Spring comes in with buds in tender sheaf
The Spring comes in with buds, the Winter flown,
The Winter fled and dead—the May will fold
Around us the soft clothing we have known
In dreams of Joy when Calm lulled storm and leaf.
The lurking showers patter down the May
And wash to glory all the yellow gleam
That loves with light and gold and green to play
On bole and bough and spray—
But after Summer, Autumn's quiet beam
Comes, and the West Wind, and the skies are grey—
And then the leaves grow heavy, the soul grows old,
Old as an age within a little day,
When once they see the doubtful dim extreme,
When belfries of the Winter once have tolled
The knells of death, then dross is all their gold.

A SEASON OF REPOSE

In summer time, under the leaves, in Calm
Of middle country, sweet it is to be
Alone amid the old monotony
Of sabbath Peace, which, holy as a Psalm
Of David, falls on aching Thought in balm,
Rich with the reverence of high ecstasy
And dreams of David's land of vine and palm.

David is dead long time, and poets here
Sell their rich souls upon more sordid marts;
And as a grape is crushed all human hearts
Are trampled of the Beauty they held dear,
Their Wine soon quaffed, their Memory but a tear
Dried by new Passion ere another starts—
Dream not of David thou in human fear.

All souls are lost in the vain world of noise;
All gifts of God are bartered for that pelf
And every angel soul will change itself
To serve a brutish idol which destroys
The sacred spirit's mortal equipoise,
Eternal Calm—to serve an evil elf
Who traffics but Life's lust for Cherub joys.

Here, in a Summer of sweet Solitude,
Oblivion lives gentlier than Thought,
Which pains the spirit anxious and distraught,
Hissing harsh names of disillusion rude—

Blind Apathy of men, Ingratitude,
And Gain, for loss of noble kin dear bought—
Here, 'mid the rose, let Envy not intrude.

The pious time of fretful Quietness
Is panting with the happy heart of Noon,
And Life, under the leaves, were yet a boon,
If, lulled in slumber mute, this Happiness
By night or day knew everlastingness,
If 'twere not hurt by dread of waking soon,
Something endured amid the world to bless—

Song, by enraptured Beauty waked and stirred,
Filling the heart with bitter shrill delight,
Killing the heart with joy to live aright,
Stronger than Thought doled out in sound and word,
And better than all noise of pipe or bird—
The spirit's own high winging in great light,
The spirit's own clear singing, spirit-heard.

Leaves weave a world of images to last—
The tideless placid passage of the Nile,
The sensuous seasons of a tropic isle,
The blooms, the glooms, the shadows over-cast
That fall in opiate peace upon the Past,
Far from the stress of cities mile on mile,
The middle calm of country, earth-bound fast.

In the beginning Calm on all things lay—
Clung round Eternity as Light on Space,
Setting a glory unto Beauty's face,
Lulling the primal Time to drowse and stay;
When we are hence she shall resume her sway
And rule with other Time in every place—
When echoes of old Life have ebbed away.

Here was a Druid's house of noise and spell
In the forgotten yesterday of now :
The glade called out with sacrifice and vow,
Till on his gods long Death oblivious fell,
And with that far Dawn rang the cloister bell
Calling lone hermits at one shrine to bow :
The forest stands above their dark-built cell.

The Tide with hideous whirl and wash and foam
Breaks over all and all with tumult fills ;
But anon ebbs, backwards its billow spills :—
Horace, the fish are free ! But earth and loam
Have claimed the ruins of thy little home,
Have claimed thy farm among the Sabine hills,—
Aye, and one day will claim thy tomb and Rome.

Ah, drown the hours deep in Oblivion's wave,
Or living shun they still Death's old regret !
Unconscious falls the rose, the mignonette
Buries its odour in a winter's grave,
And no vain Love will strive their joy to save,
No heart throb slow and think ne'er to forget—
Only this human Life for tears doth crave.

O Vanity too vain of human heart,
How dost thou mind thy Summer's withered bloom,
And Beauty, springing from her Mother's tomb !
How dost thou yearn for Manners that depart,
And Times with goodness holy that will start
To no new being from their tarnished gloom !—
How dost thou cherish Memory's idle smart !

Drown Thought—but ah, it will not die or swoon !
It is the Worm that liveth for Hell's pain,
The smoke of torment haunting the quick brain

With faces mocking as the winter moon
To a lost child, who hears the Banshee's croon
 Shrill in the shimmer of the icy plain,
And knows her clammy hand will clasp him soon.

So are these piteous tears for ever shed,
 And Grief waits everywhere among the crowd
 Where Life with noise and folly most is loud :
Now she invades my solitude with Dread
And anxious Thought, all in my Summer bed
 Of flowers the fairest, curtained with a cloud
Of lilac bloom, in Quiet's mansion spread.

But Noon is far, the dusk more narrow grows ;
 And soon a star will hush the sparrows' din,
 And fold them all the stooping eaves within ;
Now cold will fall with drooping leaves the rose,
The lilac flowers will drink the dew and close ;
 And silent Hours will link anew and spin
The world and Thought round Seasons of Repose.

WITH ONLY THIS FOR LIKENESS, ONLY THESE
WORDS

With only this for likeness, only these words,
I look this June upon the bloom of the earth,
Upon the rare brown and the young green of the earth,
Yearning for power and finding but these words.

The changing tide of radiance in the sky
Is over me, and earth and earth around,
Here where no waters rock, no streets resound—
Earth glory and the glory of the sky

Around, above—but far, how far beyond!—
For these will pass, their memory will sleep—
The train of Beauty vain in vain will sweep
Past the dumb soul, the memory beyond.

I cannot grasp that glory with my hand,
Nor clasp my wonder in the casket choice
Of undulant words or words of the straight voice—
I, stammering of speech and halt of hand.

FAIRY TALES

O spirits heaven born!
 O kind De Danann souls,
 Whose music down our story rolls,
And holds it near the morn,

You stir the poet heart
 To dream in quickening rimes
 The magic of the fairy times
That never shall depart!

O fairy people good,
 Truth-tellers of the dew!
 The face of truth smiles only true
Beneath your beauty's hood;

And wins from idle story
 Souls that the world would mar,
 Showing the common things that are
As images of glory.

THE COMING-IN OF SUMMER

Yesterday a swallow
 Cuckoo-song to-day,
And anon will follow
 All the flight of May,
For Summer is a-coming in.

Corncrake's ancient sorrow
 Pains the evening hush,
But the dawn to-morrow
 Gladdens with the thrush—
And Summer is a-coming in.

Oh! laburnum yellow,
 Lilac and the rose,
Chestnut shadow mellow
 In my garden-close,
And Summer, Summer coming in!

Lo, with shield and arrow,
 Burnished helm and spear,
Flower and leaflet narrow
 Rank on rank appear—
King Summer is a-coming in!

Summer, haste and hallow
 Something of the Spring,
Which is harsh and callow
 Till thy herald sing—
Oh! Summer is a-coming in!

O BURSTING BUD OF JOY

O bursting bud of joy
I pluck thee in thy flower!
Fast I plant thee in my breast
To bloom and bloom for ever.

I lived without thee long,
Lonesome my life without thee.
Lightly blossom in my breast,
O flower mine, for ever!

FOR VICTORY

An old man weeps
And a young man sorrows
While a child is busy with his gladness.
The old shall cheer
And the young shall battle,—
The child shall tremble for their gladness.

O Victory
How fair thou comest,
Young though the ages are thy raiment!
Thy song of death
How sweet thou singest,
Coming in that splendour of thy raiment!

All flaming thou
In grandeur of the Fianna
Or crowned with the memory of Tara!
In the fame of Kings,
In the might of chieftains,
Bound in the memory of Tara!

Sweet little child
To thee the victory—
Thou shalt be now as the Fianna!
For thee the feast,
For thee the lime-white mansions,
And the hounds on the hills of Fianna!

OF THE MAN OF MY FIRST PLAY

As one who stands in awe when on his sight
A fragment of antiquity doth burst
And body huge above the plain which erst
Knew its high fame and all its olden might,
So in a dream of vanquished power and right
I gazed on him, a fragment from the first,
A ruin vast, half builded here and curst,—
Perhaps full moulded in the eternal night.

How may I show him?—How his story plan
Who was prefigured to the dreaming eye
In term of other being?—May he fill
This mask of life?—Or will my creature cry
Shame that I dwarf the sequel and the man
To house him thus within a fragment still?

ENVOI: 1904

Seeking, I onward strive, straight on, nor yet
Come to the place I sighted long ago,
Nor shall come, I fear now, until the glow
Of this impetuous morning-tide be set
'Mid sober-tinted clouds of calm, regret,
Philosophy—destined perhaps to grow,
For all their shadow, into truth, and so
To trust more sure that strongly can forget.

The prelude thus of all my after-play
These various notes, most wayward, hesitant,—
The groping of blind fingers that will stray
Over the stiff strange keys ere the bold chant
Breaks from the organ, sudden, resonant,
And men that murmured waiting, silent stay.

INSCRIPTIONS

INSCRIPTIONS

I

OF IRELAND

A half of pathos is the past we know,
A half the future into which we go;
Or present joy broken with old regret,
Or sorrow saved from hell by one hope yet.
There once was pleasant water and fresh land
Where now the Sphinx gazes across the sand;
Yet may she hope, though dynasties have died,
That Change abides while Time and she abide.

II

What of my careful ways of speech?
What are my cold words to the heart
That lives in man? They cannot reach
One passion simpler than their art.

III

Though silence be the meed of death
In dust of death a soul doth burn :
Poet, rekindled by thy breath,
Joy flames within her funeral urn.

IV.

My poet yearns and shudders with desire
 To bring to speech your music's intense thought :
 It is music all, yet he in ice and fire
 Excruciates till it to words is wrought.

V

—Winter is dead ! Hark, hark, upon our hills
 The voices for whose coming thou didst yearn !
 Hail Spring ! O Life, with happy Spring return !
 O Love, revive ! Joy's laugh the dawn-tide fills.

—I shall not see him coming, Joy the vernal,
 Joy the heart-wakener, with his songs and roses :
 To thee the Spring : to me Death, who discloses
 The splendour of another Joy, eternal !

VI

What is white?
 The soul of the sage, faith-lit,
 The trust of Age,
 The infant's untaught wit.

What more white?
 The face of Truth made known,
 The voice of Youth
 Singing before her throne.

IN PARIS

So here is my desert and here am I
In the midst of it alone,
Silent and free as a hawk in the sky,
Unnoticed and unknown.

I speak to no one from sun to sun,
And do my single will,
Though round me loud voiced millions run
And life is never still.

There goes the bell of the Sorbonne
Just as in Villon's day—
He heard it here go sounding on,
And stopped his work to pray—

Just in this place, in time of snow,
Alone, at a table bent—
Four hundred and fifty years ago
He wrote that Testament.

THE NIGHT HUNT

In the morning, in the dark,
When the stars began to blunt,
By the wall of Barna Park
Dogs I heard and saw them hunt
All the parish dogs were there,
All the dogs for miles around,
Teeming up behind a hare,
In the dark, without a sound.

How I heard I scarce can tell—
'Twas a patter in the grass—
And I did not see them well
Come across the dark and pass;
Yet I saw them and I knew
Spearman's dog and Spellman's dog
And, beside my own dog too,
Leamy's from the Island Bog.

In the morning when the sun
Burnished all the green to gorse,
I went out to take a run
Round the bog upon my horse;
And my dog that had been sleeping
In the heat beside the door
Left his yawning and went leaping
On a hundred yards before.

Through the village street we passed—
Not a dog there raised a snout—
Through the street and out at last
On the white bog road and out
Over Barna Park full pace,
Over to the Silver Stream,
Horse and dog in happy race,
Rider between thought and dream.

By the stream, at Leamy's house,
Lay a dog—my pace I curbed—
But our coming did not rouse
Him from drowsing undisturbed;
And my dog, as unaware
Of the other, dropped beside
And went running by me there
With my horse's slackened stride.

Yet by something, by a twitch
Of the sleeper's eye, a look
From the runner, something which
Little chords of feeling shook,
I was conscious that a thought
Shuddered through the silent deep
Of a secret—I had caught
Something I had known in sleep.

THE MAN UPRIGHT

I once spent an evening in a village
Where the people are all taken up with tillage,
Or do some business in a small way
Among themselves, and all the day
Go crooked, doubled to half their size,
Both working and loafing, with their eyes
Stuck in the ground or in a board,—
For some of them tailor, and some of them hoard
Pence in a till in their little shops,
And some make shoe-soles—they get the tops
Ready-made from England, and they die cobblers—
All bent up double, a village of hobblers
And slouchers and squatters, whether they straggle
Up and down, or bend to haggles
Over a counter, or bend at a plough,
Or to dig with a spade, or to milk a cow,
Or to shove the goose-iron stiffly along
The stuff on the sleeve-board, or lace the fong
In the boot on the last, or to draw the wax-end
Tight cross-ways—and so to make or to mend
What will soon be worn out by the crooked people.
The only thing straight in the place was the steeple,
I thought at first. I was wrong in that;
For there past the window at which I sat
Watching the crooked little men
Go slouching, and with the gait of a hen

An odd little woman go pattering past,
And the cobbler crouching over his last
In the window opposite, and next door
The tailor squatting inside on the floor—
While I watched them, as I have said before,
And thought that only the steeple was straight,
There came a man of a different gait—
A man who neither slouched nor pattered,
But planted his steps as if each step mattered;
Yet walked down the middle of the street
Not like a policeman on his beat,
But like a man with nothing to do
Except walk straight upright like me and you.

WISHES FOR MY SON

BORN ON SAINT CECILIA'S DAY 1912

Now, my son, is life for you,
And I wish you joy of it,—
Joy of power in all you do,
Deeper passion, better wit
Than I had who had enough,
Quicker life and length thereof,
More of every gift but love.

Love I have beyond all men,
Love that now you share with me—
What have I to wish you then
But that you be good and free,
And that God to you may give
Grace in stronger days to live?

For I wish you more than I
Ever knew of glorious deed,
Though no rapture passed me by
That an eager heart could heed,
Though I followed heights and sought
Things the sequel never brought :

Wild and perilous holy things
Flaming with a martyr's blood,
And the joy that laughs and sings
Where a foe must be withstood,

Joy of headlong happy chance
Leading on the battle dance.

But I found no enemy,
No man in a world of wrong,
That Christ's word of charity
Did not render clean and strong—
Who was I to judge my kind,
Blindest groper of the blind?

God to you may give the sight
And the clear undoubting strength
Wars to knit for single right,
Freedom's war to knit at length,
And to win, through wrath and strife,
To the sequel of my life.

But for you, so small and young,
Born on Saint Cecilia's Day,
I in more harmonious song
Now for nearer joys should pray—
Simple joys: the natural growth
Of your childhood and your youth,
Courage, innocence, and truth:

These for you, so small and young,
In your hand and heart and tongue.

POSTSCRIPTUM

SEPTEMBER 1913

I, Adam, saw this life begin
And lived in Eden without sin,
Until the fruit of knowledge I ate
And lost my gracious primal state.

I, Nero, fiddled while Rome burned :
I saw my empire overturned,
And proudly to my murderers cried—
An artist dies in me!—and died.

And though sometimes in swoon of sense
I now regain my innocence,
I pay still for my knowledge, and still
Remain the fool of good and ill.

And though my tyrant days are o'er
I earn my tyrant's fate the more
If now secure within my walls
I fiddle while my country falls.

NOTES

Grange House Lodge : Marbhan (pronounced approximately Maurav-aun), the brother of Guaire, King of Connacht in the seventh century, is the hermit of the Old-Irish poem known as King and Hermit.

The Yellow Bittern : An Bunan Buidhe. All my translations are very close to the originals. In my version of this poem I have changed nothing for the purpose of elucidation. I have even translated the name of Loch Mhic an Ein, a lake in the North-west of Ireland. Some of the references must be obscure to all but students of Irish literature; I think, however, that the poem does not suffer too much from the difficulty of these.

Druimfhionn Donn Dilis : a poem of the Jacobite period. Druimfhionn Donn Dilis (pronounced approximately dhrim-in dhowndheelish) the name of a cow—white-backed, brown, true—is one of the symbolic names of Ireland. This is a dialogue between the Stuart and Druimfhionn.

Eve : an Old-Irish poem of the tenth century. Of its four stanzas I have omitted one which I think worthless.

Catullus : VIII : Miser Catulle, desinas ineptire . . . In line 15 of the Latin I have adopted Professor Bury's reading :
Scelesta, anenti quae tibi manet vita?

Catullus : LXXVI : Siqua recordanti benefacta priora voluptas
est homini . . .

Postscriptum : Nero's cry was, Qualis artifex pereo !

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
Los Angeles

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

Form L9-30m-11,50(2554)444

THE LIBRARY

*PR MacDonagh-
6025 Lyrical poems
M1395 1



*PR
6025
M1395 1
